

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A hot-fillable plastic container, comprising:
a body portion having a top portion and a bottom portion,
the top portion including a shoulder, a grip portion below the shoulder and inwardly recessed into the body and a ledge provided along at least one lateral extreme of the grip portion due to inward recessing of the grip portion, the grip portion defining at least one first vacuum panel,
the bottom portion including a plurality of second vacuum panels and a base portion below the plurality of second vacuum panels, each of said plurality of said vacuum panels having a deformation capability that is different than a deformation capability of the at least one first vacuum panel.
2. The hot-fillable container according to claim 1, further comprising a plurality of lateral ribs positioned within each of the second vacuum panels.
3. The hot-fillable container according to claim 1, further comprising at least one lateral rib provided on the top portion of the body portion and laterally adjacent the at least one first vacuum panel.
4. The hot-fillable container according to claim 1, wherein the deformation capability of the at least one first vacuum panel is less than the deformation capability of each of the second vacuum panels.

5. The hot-fillable container according to claim 1, wherein the container is substantially rectangular and defines two longer sides and two shorter sides, each of the longer sides having said at least one first vacuum panel, and each of the shorter sides including at least one horizontal rib provided on the upper portion of the body portion and laterally adjacent each said at least one first vacuum panel.

6. The hot-fillable container according to claim 1, further comprising a waist portion that extends into the body portion, the grip portion and the at least one first vacuum panel being provided laterally adjacent the waist portion.

7. The hot-fillable container according to claim 6, further comprising at least one lateral rib provided in the waist portion.

8. The hot-fillable container according to claim 1, wherein the grip portion is positioned substantially along a center of gravity of the body portion.

9. The hot-fillable container according to claim 1, wherein the at least one first vacuum panel provided in the grip portion defines an integral logo portion having a logo.

10. The hot-fillable container according to claim 9, wherein the logo includes raised lettering that serves as an anti-slip surface.

11. The hot-fillable container according to claim 9, wherein the logo portion has a height that is about one quarter to about one-half of a height of the top portion.

12. A hot-fillable plastic container comprising:

a top portion including a shoulder and grip portion that is depressed about 2-10mm into the top portion; and

a bottom portion integrally formed with the top portion, the bottom portion including a plurality of vacuum panels that accommodate internal forces tending to collapse the vacuum panels inwardly due to filling of the container with a liquid at an elevated temperature and subsequent cooling of the liquid,

wherein the grip portion in the top portion defines an auxiliary vacuum panel that accommodates for any portion of the internal forces not accommodated by the vacuum panels in the bottom portion.

13. The hot-fillable container according to claim 12, further comprising a plurality of lateral ribs positioned within each of the vacuum panels provided in the bottom portion.

14. The hot-fillable container according to claim 12, further comprising at least one lateral rib provided on the top portion and laterally adjacent the auxiliary vacuum panel.

15. The hot-fillable container according to claim 12, wherein a deformation capability of the auxiliary vacuum panel is less than a deformation capability of each of the vacuum panels in the bottom portion of the container.

16. The hot-fillable container according to claim 12, wherein the container is substantially rectangular and defines two longer sides and two shorter sides, each of the longer sides having one said auxiliary vacuum panel, and each of the shorter sides including at least one lateral rib provided on the top portion and laterally adjacent each said auxiliary vacuum panel.

17. The hot-fillable container according to claim 12, further comprising a waist portion that extends into the top portion, the grip portion and the auxiliary vacuum panel being provided laterally adjacent the waist portion.

18. The hot-fillable container according to claim 17, further comprising at least one lateral rib provided in the waist portion.

19. The hot-fillable container according to claim 12, wherein the grip portion is adjacent a center of gravity of the container.

20. The hot-fillable container according to claim 12, wherein the auxiliary vacuum panel defines an integral logo portion having a logo.

21. The hot-fillable container according to claim 20, wherein the logo includes an anti-slip surface.

22. The hot-fillable container according to claim 20, wherein the logo portion has a height that is about one-quarter to about one-half of a height of the top portion and a width that is about 50-90% of a width of the top portion.

23. A plastic container, comprising:

a body portion having a top portion and a bottom portion, the body portion defining a center of gravity in a region along a transition between the top and bottom portions,

the top portion including a shoulder and a grip portion that at least partially coincides with the center of gravity of the body portion,

the bottom portion providing a surface that is adapted to receive a wrap-around label.

24. The container according to claim 23, further comprising a plurality of vacuum panels in the bottom portion and an auxiliary vacuum panel in the grip portion.

25. The container according to claim 24, wherein the auxiliary vacuum panel has a deformation capacity that is less than a deformation capacity of each of the vacuum panels in the bottom portion.

26. The container according to claim 24, further comprising a plurality of lateral ribs within each of the plurality of vacuum panels in the bottom portion.

27. The container according to claim 24, further comprising a waist portion that extends into the body portion, the grip portion and the auxiliary vacuum panel being provided laterally adjacent the waist portion.

28. The container according to claim 27, further comprising at least one lateral rib provided in the waist portion.

29. The container according to claim 23, further comprising at least one lateral rib provided in the top portion and laterally adjacent the grip portion.

30. The container according to claim 23, wherein the grip portion defines an auxiliary vacuum panel and logo integrally formed therewith.

31. A container comprising:

a body portion having a top portion and a bottom portion integral with the top portion, the top portion having a generally rectangular shape defining two shorter sides and two longer sides,

a grip portion provided in each of the longer sides of the top portion,

a waist portion provided laterally adjacent the grip portion and along the two shorter sides of the top portion, and

at least one laterally extending stiffening rib provided within the waist portion and laterally adjacent the grip portion.

32. The container according to claim 31, further comprising a plurality of vacuum panels in the bottom portion of the container and an auxiliary vacuum panel in the grip portion of the container.

33. The container according to claim 31, wherein the grip portion is provided substantially along a center of gravity of the body portion.

34. The container according to claim 31, wherein the grip portion includes a vacuum panel portion having a logo formed integrally therewith.

35. A hot-fillable plastic container comprising:
a top portion including a shoulder, an inwardly depressed grip portion and a waist portion that extends into the top portion where the grip portion is positioned; and
a bottom portion integrally formed with the top portion, the bottom portion including a plurality of vacuum panels that accommodate internal forces tending to collapse the vacuum panels inwardly due to filling of the container with a liquid at an elevated temperature and subsequent cooling of the liquid,

wherein the grip portion in the top portion defines an auxiliary vacuum panel that accommodates for any portion of the internal forces not accommodated by the vacuum panels in the bottom portion, and

wherein the container is substantially rectangular and defines at least a first side and a second side, the first side having said auxiliary vacuum panel, and at least the second side including the waist.

36. A plastic container, comprising a body portion having a top portion and a bottom portion, the top portion including a grip portion that has a height, width and depth that are dimensioned and structured to provide a good hand-fit for a variety of hand sizes.

37. The container according to claim 36, wherein the bottom portion includes a wrap-around label.

38. The container according to claim 37, wherein the grip portion defines a logo portion adapted to receive an auxiliary label.

39. The container according to claim 36, wherein the height of the grip portion is about 25-50% of a height of the top portion, the width of the grip portion is about 50-90% of a width of the grip portion, and the depth of the grip portion is about 2-10mm.

40. The container according to claim 36, wherein the height of the grip portion is about 33% of the height of the top portion, the width of the grip portion is about 60-80% of the width of the top portion, and the depth is about 5mm.

41. The container according to claim 40, wherein the width is about 70% of the width of the top portion.

42. The container according to claim 36, wherein the grip portion has at least one of an oval shape, a circular shape, a rectangular shape and a diamond shape.

43. The container according to claim 36, wherein the grip portion defines an anti-slip surface.

44. The container according to claim 43, wherein the anti-slip surface includes at least one of embossments and raised portions.

45. The container according to claim 44, wherein a center of gravity of the container falls within a region where the top and bottom portions meet, and the grip portion and the region have at least one overlapping area.

46. A hot-fillable plastic container, comprising:
a body portion having a top portion and a bottom portion,
the top portion including a grip portion inwardly recessed at least 5mm into the body portion and a grip edge provided along at least an upper side of the grip portion due to inward recessing of the grip portion, wherein the grip edge forms a transition between the recessed grip portion and a non-recessed wall portion of the top portion of the body portion adjacent the grip portion, the grip portion being designed to accommodate at least a portion of internal forces tending to collapse the container inwardly due to filling of the container with a liquid at an elevated temperature and subsequent cooling of the liquid,
the bottom portion including a base portion and a plurality of vacuum panels designed to accommodate at least a portion of said internal forces, said plurality of vacuum panels having a deformation capability that is different than a deformation capability of the grip portions.

47. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, further comprising a plurality of lateral ribs positioned within each of the vacuum panels.

48. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, further comprising at least one lateral rib provided on the top portion of the body portion and on a sidewall of the container that is laterally adjacent each said grip portion.

49. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, wherein the deformation capability of the grip portions is less than the deformation capability of the vacuum panels.

50. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, wherein the container is substantially rectangular and defines two longer sides and two shorter sides, each of the longer sides having one said grip portion, and each of the shorter sides including at least one horizontal rib provided on the top portion of the body portion and laterally adjacent each said grip portion.

51. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, further comprising a waist portion that extends into the body portion, the grip portion being provided laterally adjacent the waist portion.

52. The hot-fillable container according to claim 51, further comprising at least one lateral rib provided in the waist portion.

53. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, wherein the grip portion is positioned substantially along a center of gravity of the body portion.

54. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, wherein at least one said grip portion defines an integral logo portion having a logo.

55. The hot-fillable container according to claim 54, wherein the logo includes raised lettering.

56. The hot-fillable container according to claim 54, wherein the logo includes recessed lettering.

57. The hot-fillable container according to claim 54, wherein the logo portion has a height that is about one quarter to about one-half of a height of the top portion.

58. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, wherein the bottom portion includes structure to accommodate a wrap-around label.

59. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, wherein the grip portion defines a logo portion adapted to receive an auxiliary label.

60. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, wherein the grip edge substantially circumscribes the grip portion.

61. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, wherein a cross-sectional shape of the body portion and the base portion is substantially rectangular along substantially an entire axial extent thereof.

62. The hot-fillable plastic container according to claim 46, wherein a center of gravity of the container is positioned in a region of the body portion spanning a transition between the top and the bottom portions.

63. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, wherein the vacuum panels are positioned above the base portion.

64. The hot-fillable container according to claim 46, wherein the container includes one said grip portion on opposed side walls of the top portion, a capacity of the container is about 64 ounces, the bottom portion includes structure to accommodate a wrap around label, and each said grip portion includes a recessed design in the form of a logo.

65. A hot-fillable plastic container comprising:

a top portion including an inwardly depressed grip portion and a waist portion that extends into the top portion; and

a bottom portion integrally formed with the top portion, the bottom portion including a base portion and a plurality of force accommodation portions to accommodate internal forces tending to collapse the container due to filling of the container with a liquid at an elevated temperature and subsequent cooling of the liquid,

wherein the grip portion is designed to accommodate for at least a portion of the internal forces, and

wherein a cross-sectional shape of the top and bottom portions of the container is substantially rectangular along substantially an entire axial extent thereof, and the top portion of the container defines relatively longer opposed sides, each having at least one said grip portion, and relatively shorter sides each having at least one said waist portion.

66. A hot-fillable PET plastic container, comprising:

a body portion having a top portion and a bottom portion each defining a pair of opposed relatively longer walls and a pair of opposed relatively shorter walls, the

body portion including corner portions connecting the relatively longer and shorter walls,

the top portion including a pair of opposed grip portions each inwardly recessed at least 2 mm with respect to the relatively longer walls of the top portion, each said grip portion having a grip edge provided along at least a portion of a perimeter of each grip portion due to inward recessing of the grip portions, wherein:

each said grip edge forms a transition between each said recessed grip portion and at least one non-recessed wall portion of the top portion adjacent the grip portion, and

the bottom portion includes a base portion and a plurality of internal force accommodation portions, the base portion including a pair of opposed relatively shorter sides and a pair of opposed relatively longer sides corresponding, respectively, to the relatively shorter and longer walls of the body portion, each of the accommodation portions being structured to accommodate internal forces tending to collapse the container inwardly due to filling of the container with a liquid at an elevated temperature and subsequent cooling of the liquid, wherein:

the bottom portion includes structure to receive a wrap-around label positioned above the base portion and below the top portion to cover the longer and shorter walls in the bottom portion.

67. The hot-fillable container according to claim 66, wherein each of the grip portions is designed to accommodate for at least a portion of said internal forces, said grip portions having a deformation capacity that is less than a deformation capacity of the accommodation portions in the bottom portion.

68. The hot-fillable container according to claim 66, wherein the body portion defines a center of gravity in a region along a transition between the top and bottom portions, and each of the grip portions at least partially coincides with the center of gravity of the body portion.

69. The hot-fillable container according to claim 66, wherein a cross-sectional shape of at least the body portion is substantially rectangular along an entire axial extent thereof.

70. The hot-fillable container according to claim 66, wherein each said grip portion is recessed about 2-10 mm into the top portion.

71. The hot-fillable container according to claim 66, wherein each said grip portion is recessed more than 5mm into the top portion.

72. The hot-fillable container according to claim 66, wherein a distance between the grip portions is about 75-90 mm.

73. A hot-fillable PET plastic container, comprising:
a body portion having a top portion and a bottom portion,
the top portion including a shoulder, a pair of opposed grip portions below the shoulder and inwardly recessed into the body portion of the container, each said grip portion having a grip edge provided along at least a portion of a perimeter of each grip portion, wherein each said grip edge forms a transition between each said recessed grip portion and at least one non-recessed wall portion of the top portion adjacent the

grip portion, wherein the grip edge of each of the grip portions is positioned along at least a top border of the grip portion,

the bottom portion including at least four vacuum panels and a base portion below the plurality of vacuum panels, each of the vacuum panels being structured to accommodate internal forces tending to collapse the vacuum panels inwardly due to filling of the container with a liquid at an elevated temperature and subsequent cooling of the liquid, the bottom portion including structure to receive a wrap around label covering the plurality of vacuum panels.

74. The hot-fillable container according to claim 73, wherein each of the grip portions defines an auxiliary vacuum panel having a deformation capacity that is less than a deformation capacity of the vacuum panels in the bottom portion.

75. The hot-fillable container according to claim 73, wherein at least the bottom portion of the container is substantially round.

76. A hot-fillable PET plastic container, comprising:

a body portion having a top portion and a bottom portion each defining a pair of opposed relatively longer walls and a pair of opposed relatively shorter walls, the body portion including corner portions connecting the relatively longer and shorter walls,

the top portion including a pair of opposed grip portions each inwardly recessed at least 2 mm with respect to the relatively longer walls of the top portion, wherein each said grip portion has a height that is about one quarter to about one-half of a height of the top portion,

the bottom portion including a base and a plurality of internal force accommodation portions, each of the accommodation portions being structured to accommodate internal forces tending to collapse the container inwardly due to filling of the container with a liquid at an elevated temperature and subsequent cooling of the liquid, wherein:

the bottom portion includes structure to receive and position a wrap-around label,

each of the two relatively shorter walls in the top portion includes a waist portion,

each grip portion has a height that is about one quarter to about one-half of a height of the top portion,

a capacity of the container is about 64 ounces, and

each grip portion defines a molded logo portion including raised or depressed lettering.

77. The hot-fillable container according to claim 76, wherein a cross-sectional shape of the body portion and the base portion is substantially rectangular along substantially an entire axial extent thereof.

78. The hot-fillable container according to claim 76, further comprising a grip edge that partially circumscribes the grip portion.

79. The hot-fillable container according to claim 76, wherein a center of gravity of the container is positioned in a region of the body portion spanning a transition between the top and the bottom portions.

80. The hot-fillable container according to claim 76, wherein the accommodation portions are positioned above the base portion.

81. The hot-fillable container according to claim 80, wherein the accommodation portions include at least two opposed vacuum panels each including at least four horizontal strengthening ribs.

82. The hot-fillable container according to claim 76, wherein each said grip portion is inwardly recessed at least 5 mm.

83. The hot-fillable container according to claim 76, wherein each of the larger and shorter walls of the bottom portion includes at least one said accommodation portion.

84. The hot-fillable container according to claim 76, wherein each grip portion is centrally located within the longer walls of the top portion, so that the container is grippable from the direction of either of the shorter walls.

85. The hot-fillable container according to claim 76, wherein each grip portion includes a grip edge structured to help prevent inadvertent slipping when the container is held upright and when liquid contents are dispensed.

86. The hot-fillable container according to claim 76, wherein the container is filled with about 64 ounces of liquid contents.